



**Embassy of the United States of America  
Canberra, Australia**

**UNCLASSIFIED  
MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 1, 2008  
**TO:** Department of State – CA/OCS/ACS/EAP  
**FROM:** American Embassy, Canberra  
**TAGS:** CASC  
**SUBJECT:** DEATH: Disposition of Remains Report  
**REF:** 7 FAM 260

The following information is submitted in accordance with the referenced requirements. Various area mortuaries were surveyed in order to compile this data. The laws cited are from the legislation of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Australia, Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2003 (1) and Cemeteries and Crematoria (Code of Practice) Approval 2007 (2).

- (1) <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/2003-31/current/pdf/2003-31.pdf>
- (2) <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/di/2007-100/current/pdf/2007-100.pdf>

The previous report was submitted by Canberra on July 27, 2005.

**Part I.**

Australia

**Part II. U.S. Embassy or Consulate Information**

U.S. Embassy, Canberra  
Address: Moonah Place, Yarralumla, ACT 2600  
Phone: (61) (2) 6214-5600  
Fax: (61) (2) 6273-3191  
After Hours Phone: (61) (2) 6214-5600

[Consular Information Sheet](#) for Australia, Public Announcement or Travel Warnings can be accessed via the internet at <http://www.travel.state.gov>

[Register With the U.S. Embassy](#) at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

### **Part III. Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors.**

Country Profile: Host Country Religions (From [Background Notes](#))

Religious Activities For Visitors (From [Post Reports On Line](#) (Intranet):

**Part IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in the Host Country:** Major mortuaries used by U.S. citizens, if applicable – name, address, phone/fax, contact names, quality of services, service cost.

**DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy, Canberra, Australia assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians and other service providers.**

The quality of service and fees charged by funeral companies in the ACT region are consistent with the appropriate industry standards in Australia. We have not had any information that indicates the quality of care provided by these funeral directors are substandard to the expectations of individuals using a reputable funeral company in the United States.

Grantley Perry & Sons  
12 Sandford Street  
MITCHELL, ACT 2911  
ph: 61-2-6241-4101  
[www.perryfunerals.com](http://www.perryfunerals.com)

Toscan Dinn Funerals  
10 Liardet Street  
WESTON ACT 2611  
Ph: 61-2-6287-3466  
[www.toscandinn.com.au](http://www.toscandinn.com.au)

M.H. O'Rourke  
2 Dundas Court  
PHILLIP ACT 2606  
ph: 61-2-6166-0966  
[www.oroukefunerals.com.au](http://www.oroukefunerals.com.au)

White Lady Funerals  
101 Nettlefold Street  
BELCONNEN ACT 2617  
Ph: 61-2-6251-4369  
[www.whiteladyfunerals.com.au](http://www.whiteladyfunerals.com.au)

Tobin Brothers  
75 Canberra Avenue  
KINGSTON ACT 2604  
Ph: 61-2-6295-2799  
[www.tobinscanberrafunerals.com.au](http://www.tobinscanberrafunerals.com.au)

William Cole Funerals  
60 Nettlefold Street  
BELCONNEN ACT 2617  
Ph: 61-2-6253-3655  
[www.williamcofunerals.com.au](http://www.williamcofunerals.com.au)

Norwood Park Crematorium  
65 Sandford Street  
MITCHELL ACT 2911  
Ph: 61-2-6241-3177

The ACT Public Cemeteries Authority (the Authority) operates under the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*. It manages and operates public cemeteries at Gungahlin, Woden and Hall.

## **Part V. Profile of services available in the host country regarding preparation and shipment of remains:**

### **1. MAXIMUM PERIOD BEFORE BURIAL OF REMAINS**

Neither ACT nor Australian law places a time limit on burial, whether or not the remains are embalmed. The ACT has seven mortuaries. There is no fee by the mortuary for storage of remains for a reasonable period of time.

### **2. EMBALMING**

Full embalming facilities are available in the ACT. Embalming is generally done as soon as possible but no later than 7 days after death.

### **3. CREMATION**

ACT and Australian law permit cremation, and cremation facilities are available in the ACT. There is one crematorium in ACT - Norwood Park Crematorium, 65 Sandford Street, Mitchell, ACT 2911.

Cremation may take place after the required certificates are submitted either by the coroner or physician, the operator of the crematorium is satisfied that there are no directions from the deceased that he/she should not be cremated and the remains are in an approved coffin, casket or other container.

Any coffin constructed of metal or having a metal internal liner or other metal insert is not acceptable for cremation.

### **4. CASKETS AND CONTAINERS**

When the body of a deceased person is to be transported out of Australia, the remains are placed in a metal-lined casket, which is hermetically sealed. The casket is then put in a freight carton. Metal-lined caskets, which meet the requirements of 7 FAM 250, are available in the ACT.

Ashes are placed in a sealed container (usually plastic) suitable to pass through the x-ray machine as required by TSA when they are to be transported by a courier company or carried by an individual or mailed overseas through the Australian postal system.

### **5. EXPORTATION OF REMAINS**

#### **HUMAN REMAINS**

Documentary requirements for exportation of human remains are as follows:

- (a) Death certificate from the Register of Births, Deaths & Marriages;
- (b) Embalming certificate issued by the undertaker;

- (c) Death Certificate issued by the Coroner or physician;
- (d) Letter stating that the remains have no quarantinable diseases, issued by the Coroner or physician;
- (e) Affidavit by the undertaker attesting to contents and embalming and that the cask is hermetically sealed; and
- (f) Consular Mortuary Certificate issued by the Consular Officer.

## HUMAN CREMAINS/ASHES

Local requirements for the exportation of human remains are as follows:

Documents to accompany the container of the decedent's ashes are as follows:

- (a) Death certificate from the Register of Births, Deaths & Marriages
- (b) Cremation certificate from the crematorium
- (c) Statutory Declaration from the funeral director or crematorium stating the container holds only the cremated remains of the deceased.

## 6. COSTS

Charges are based on the exchange rate of August 21, 2008: \$1.00 = A\$1.15 (Australian Dollar)

### Local Burial:

Estimated costs including funeral directors fees, timber casket, legal documentation and certificates, embalming and burial at cemetery with service:,

US\$8,800

### Local Cremation:

Estimated costs including funeral director's fees, timber casket, transportation of remains to crematorium facilities, cremation fees, documentation and certificates, and strewing of ashes:

US\$6,300

#### Preparation and shipment of deceased to USA:

Estimated costs related to preparation of human remains for shipment (assuming 200kg) including funeral director's fees, embalming, metal casket and liner, shipping container, legal documentation and certificates, and shipping costs by air from Canberra, ACT.

To San Francisco	US\$11,900
To Chicago	US\$12,100
To New York	US\$12,200

#### Preparation and shipment of cremated remains to USA:

Estimated costs including funeral director's fees, timber casket, cremation fees, documentation and certificates, and shipment costs:

US\$6500

Approximate costs for international courier shipment of ashes between 2-4 kilograms:

US\$200

Human ashes are permitted to be mailed to the United States from Australia and must be sent by Registered Post International with insurance. The usual delivery time is 4 – 6 work days, costing approximately US\$75.

Australia Post does not recommend ashes to be mailed overseas through the postal system if other alternatives are available. Further information and contact details for Australia Post is available on their website;

<http://www.auspost.com.au/>

**NOTE:** All prices quoted above are estimated shipping costs only and may be subject to change.

## 7. EXHUMATION AND SHIPMENT

Exhumation in the ACT may be carried out at any time after burial. Any persons can apply for an exhumation. An exhumation application must be completed and a death certificate must be produced for application to the Chief Executive Officer of the ACT Health Department.

The cost of exhumation and preparation for shipment of remains to the United States (San Francisco) is approximately US\$16,300.

## 8. AUTOPSIES (post-mortem examination)

An autopsy (also called a post mortem), a thorough medical examination performed by a Pathologist to establish the medical cause of death, is usually carried out within 48 hours after the death of a person.

There are three levels of autopsy:

1. Complete – in which all body cavities are examined (including the head)
2. Limited – which may exclude the head
3. Selective – where specific organs only are examined.

Autopsies will usually include testing for any infections (microbiology), changes in body tissue and organs (anatomical histology), and chemicals, e.g. medication, drugs or poisons (toxicology and pharmacology).

There are two reasons why an autopsy is performed in Australia:

### a) Hospital autopsy:

The family may ask the doctor to arrange for an autopsy to be performed, or a doctor may ask the family for permission to carry out an autopsy to help find out why the person died. A hospital autopsy can not be performed without the permission of the family or the person before they died.

### b) Coronial autopsy:

The current practice in the ACT is that all accidental deaths or deaths due to suspicious or unnatural causes, or anyone who had not seen a physician in the three months prior to death (which would normally include U.S. citizen visitors), are reported to the Coroner's Office for determination of death. In the ACT all magistrates are also coroners and the Chief Magistrate is the Chief Coroner.

The Coroner will decide whether an autopsy is needed to assist in determining the manner and cause of the death of a person. The permission of the next of kin is not required for a coronial autopsy.

When an autopsy is required, it can take from 3-6 months to obtain an official cause of death for release to the Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages in Canberra. After the Coroner releases the cause of death, application can be made for a local death certificate showing the cause of death, which is used by post to issue the Final Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad.

## 9. REMARKS

### Obtaining a copy of a Death Certificate in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

All deaths in the ACT are registered with the Births, Deaths and Marriages unit within the Registrar-General's Office (RGO). An application for a copy of the death certificate may be made to the Registrar. A fee will be charged for a copy of a death certificate.

In certain circumstances, a death may be registered with the Registrar without the cause of death recorded. Where this occurs, the coroner may be contacted to ascertain when the cause of death will be registered with the Registrar so that a complete death certificate may be obtained.